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The following duel story presents a striking contrast to those we are now accustomed to hear and gives us some idea of the character of those dashing beaux sabreurs by whose aid Napoleon became the scourge of Europe.

In the city of Strassburg at the close of the eighteenth century soldiers of all ranks had ample opportunities of picking quarrels whenever they wished. A captain of Hussars named Fournier indulged in this amusement to his heart's content and became celebrated for his aggressive temper and his address with arms. Strassburg had to reproach him for the loss of her sons, and especially for having challenged without any plausible reason a young man named Blume, whom he killed without the slightest pity.

On the very day of Blume's funeral General Moreau gave a ball, to which were invited all the members of the high bourgeoisie. It was desirable to avoid the scandalous scenes which could not fail to take place between the fellow townsmen, perhaps the relations of the unfortunate deceased and the aggressor, who was styled his murderer. General Moreau therefore desired his aid-de-camp, Captain Dupont, to prevent Captain Fournier from entering the ballroom. Dupont stationed himself in a corner of one of the antechambers and immediately he caught sight of him accosted him abruptly.

"What are you going to do here?"

"Ah, is that you, Dupont? Good evening. Parbleu! You see what I am doing. I am come to the ball."

"Are you not ashamed to come to a ball the very day of the funeral of that poor fellow Blume? What will his friends and relations say?"

"They may say what they please; it is all one to me. But I should like to ask what business that is of yours?"

"It is everybody's business. Everybody is thinking and talking about it."

"Everybody is wrong, then. I don't like people to poke their noses into my affairs. And now, if you please, let me pass."

"You shall not go into the ballroom."

"Indeed! Why not?"

"You must take yourself off. The general orders you to return to your own apartments."

"Am I turned out of the house?" Dupont shrugged his shoulders.

"Are you aware of the consequences of turning Fournier out of doors?"

"I don't want to hear any of your rodomontades. Just have the goodness to take yourself off."

"Listen!" said Fournier in a fury. "I cannot have my revenge on the general because he is my superior officer, but you are my equal. You have presumed to take your snare in the insult, and you shall pay for the whole of it. We will fight."

"Listen in turn," said Dupont. "I have long been out of patience with you. I am disgusted with your bullying ways, and I hope to give you a lesson you will long remember."

Fournier would have gone mad with vexation had he not been consoled by the hope of killing Dupont. But the result of the combat was not what he

expected, for Dupont gave him a frightful wound.

"You fence well," said Fournier as he fell.

"Not badly, as you see."

"Yes. But now I know your play. You won't catch me another time, as I will soon show you."

"You wish for another encounter?"

"Parbleu! That's a matter of course."

In fact, after a few weeks' nursing Fournier for the second time was face to face with his adversary. It was now his turn. He gave Dupont a home thrust, with the comment: "You see you hold your hand too low to parry properly. After your lunge you gave me time to stock three inches of cold iron between your ribs."

"This is only the second act," cried Dupont. "We'll come to the catastrophe as soon as possible."

At the third meeting they each received a trifling scratch. So these two fire eaters, annoyed at such a negative result, agreed to recommence the struggle until one of the two confessed himself beaten. They therefore drew up a treaty to this effect, and whenever the madmen were able to meet they fought. Their persons were marked with numerous scars, yet they continued to cut and slash at each other in most enthusiastic style. Fournier used to observe now and then, "It is really astonishing that I, who always kill my man, cannot contrive to kill that devil Dupont."

After these encounters had continued some years Dupont, now promoted to the rank of general, received orders to join the army of the Grisons. He was not expected and was trying in vain to find a lodging when he perceived a chalet, through whose windows a light was gleaming. He knocked at the door and entered. A man was writing at a bureau. He turned his head and, recognizing his visitor, said before the other could cross the threshold:

"Ah, is that you, Dupont? We will have a little sword play."

"With all my heart," said Dupont to Fournier, who chanced to be the occupant of the chalet, and they set to work, chatting between the passes.

"I thought you were employed in the interior," said Fournier.

"The minister has promoted me to the Fourth corps."

"Vriment! What a curious coincidence! I command the cavalry there. And so you have only just arrived? I am delighted."

At last General Dupont's sword, after piercing General Fournier's shoulder, struck the wall.

"Saprist!" shouted Fournier.

"You didn't expect that?"

"On the contrary, directly I left my guard I knew I was caught. But 'tis you who don't expect what is going to happen."

During the little dialogue Dupont kept Fournier pinned to the wall as a naturalist would a butterfly.

"Well, what will happen?"

"The moment you stir I shall give you a thrust in the belly. You are a dead man," said Fournier.

"I shall parry your thrust."

"Impossible."

"I shall keep you pinned till you throw down your sword."

"I shall not do that. I intend to kill you."

Fortunately the noise made by the two generals was heard by some officers, who separated the combatants.

Dupont, the more reasonable of the two, sometimes thought of the absurdity of a quarrel which still went on after so many conflicts and at last decided to make an end of the matter.

One morning he called on Fournier.

"Are you come to fix a day for a match?" inquired the latter.

"Yes, but first of all let us talk a little. Listen. I intend to get married, and before doing so I should like to be

done with you.

"Oh! Oh!"

"Our quarrel has now lasted for nineteen years. I do not wish to continue a style of life which my wife might consider not exactly comfortable, and therefore I am come to propose a change in the mode of the combat. One of my friends has at Neully an inclosure planted with trees, surrounded by walls with two doors, one at each end. At the hour agreed we will go to the inclosure separately, armed with our two holster pistols, to take a single shot with each. We will try which can find the other, and whoever catches sight of the other shall fire."

"That's a droll idea."

"Ten o'clock on Thursday morning—will that do?"

"Agreed. Adieu till Thursday."

They were punctual at their rendezvous, and as soon as they were inside the inclosure they sought each other cautiously. They advanced slowly, cocked pistols in their hands, eye on the watch and ear all attention. At the turn of an alley they perceived each other. They threw themselves behind a couple of trees and waited. At last Dupont resolved to act. He waved the tail of his coat just outside the tree which protected him; then he protruded his arm, drawing it back instantly. Immediately a bullet sent a large piece of the bark flying. Fournier had lost a shot.

After a time Dupont recommenced the same maneuver on the opposite side of the tree trunk without, however, drawing his adversary's fire. Then, holding his hat in his hand, he displayed it as far as the brim. In a twinkling the hat was blown away. Fortunately there was no head inside it. Fournier, therefore, had wasted his second bullet.

Dupont then sallied from his fortress and marched up to his opponent, who awaited him in the attitude of a brave man for whom there is no further hope. When Dupont was close to him he said: "I can kill you if I like—it is my right and my privilege—but I cannot fire at a human creature in cold blood. I spare your life."

"As you please."

"I spare you today, but you clearly understand that I remain the master of my own property, of which I allow you the provisional enjoyment. If ever you give me any trouble, if ever you try to pick a quarrel with me, I shall take the liberty of reminding you that I am the lawful owner of a couple of bullets specially designed to be lodged in your skull, and we will resume the affair exactly at the point where I think proper to leave it today."

So ended a duel begun in 1794 and finished in 1813.—Chambers' Journal.

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